

Environmental wellness is an awareness of the precarious state of the earth and the effects of your daily habits on the physical environment. It includes maintaining a way of life that maximizes harmony with the earth and minimizes harm to the environment. Following are ways to help conserve resources and protect the environment:

Stop your junk mail - Americans receive almost 4 million tons of junk mail every year. If one million people stopped their junk mail, we could save up to 1.5 million trees a year. About 44 percent of junk mail is never even opened or read. Contact the major senders of junk mail saying "take me off your list." Try stopjunk.com or privatecitizen.com

Snip your six-pack rings - Six-pack holders are virtually invisible underwater, so marine animals can't avoid them. Seagulls sometimes strangle themselves by catching one loop around their neck while another loop gets snagged on a stationary object. Before you toss six-pack holders into the garbage, snip each circle with a pair of scissors. When you're on the beach, pick up any six-pack rings you find, snip them, and put them in a trash can.

Don't leave your water running - Washing dishes with the tap running can use an average of 30 gallons of water. A running faucet uses three to five gallons of water per minute. As much as five gallons of water is wasted if you leave the tap on while brushing your teeth. If you wash your car at home using an ordinary hose, you can use up to 150 gallons of water. When brushing your teeth, wet and rinse your brush only. A half gallon of water will be used as opposed to five to nine gallons. When washing dishes by hand, fill a basin of water instead of letting your water run. When washing your car, either take it to a self-service car wash, or use a shut-off nozzle on your hose when washing it at home. This can save more than 100 gallons of water.

Use recycled paper bags when shopping - Plastic shopping bags are not biodegradable. The bags never disappear in the earth; they just break into small pieces. Plastic bags that wind up in the ocean can kill marine life that swallow or get tangled in them. "Recyclable" paper bag does not mean recycled. If a bag does not say recycled, it's probably made from virgin paper. First, consider if you really need a bag before taking one – especially if your purchase is small. Also, bring your own cloth bags when you shop, or reuse old bags that you have already saved.

This year, the 9th Annual PCSB Health Fair "Goes Green." Save the date March 6, 2010. Contact Jennifer at Jennifer.patzkowsky@polk-fl.net to volunteer.